

Approved For Release 2009/09/15 : CIA-RDP85M00158R000300060031-1

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DCI/ICS 83-4562

26 APR 1983

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

VIA: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence
Director, Intelligence Community Staff

6 APR 1983

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SUBJECT: Request for Declassification

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1. This memorandum transmits a DIA request for declassification of a U-2 photograph of Nicaragua for possible use by the President in an address to a Joint Session of Congress Wednesday evening 27 April 1983 on the theme of support for U.S. policy in Central America. The request is strongly supported by Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Inter-American Affairs Nestor Sanchez.

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2. Discussion: The photograph in question is from a U-2 "OLYMPIC VICTOR" mission of 13 April 1983. The target of interest is Rio Blanco Military Camp Nicaragua, approximately 75 nm NE of Managua. At the camp, the letters "FMLN" were observed on the ground. This is the acronym for "FARABUNDO MARTI NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT" which is the military command organization for the five anti-government guerrilla groups in El Salvador. This provides circumstantial evidence of Salvadoran guerrilla activity in Nicaragua.

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3. This request is a DIA initiative (Tab A) to provide support for the Presidential briefing. It is not known if he would use it, but DIA would like to provide it for possible use. He could use the information in the speech with the photograph as backup, or it could be used after the President's speech in a question-and-answer session.

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5. There are several arguments against declassifying the imagery for the purpose suggested by DIA:

- a. The imagery is of questionable quality and may not be the best photographic evidence that could be presented.

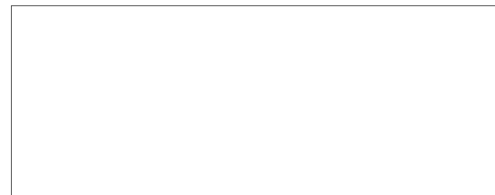
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- b. Declassification of the photography may encourage critics of the President to charge that this is "yet another case of 'selective' declassification" of questionable evidence. 25X1
- c. The link with Salvadoran guerrillas, which in this case is based merely on letters painted on the ground, is tenuous. The letters could have been put there specifically to confuse U.S. intelligence (which is known to fly aerial reconnaissance missions). If the link is false, the President's charge could potentially be very embarrassing with the Congress and the media. 25X1
- d. If the letters correctly reflect the activity depicted, then we may lose this indicator for imagery analysts after it is publicly disclosed. 25X1
- e. Public disclosure of the camp's location, if its location is not already publicly known, might result in the guerrillas moving the camp. This would eliminate any future option to launch an operation against the camp. 25X1

6. Recommendation: Disapprove the DIA request to declassify the photograph in the absence of strong confirming evidence to support the charge, potential embarrassment to the President if the charge is inaccurate, and potential damage to intelligence sources and methods if the photographic evidence is valid and revealed to the general public. 25X1



Attachment:
Tab A

~~APPROVED~~/DISAPPROVED:


Director of Central Intelligence

26 APR 1983
Date

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